Shipbuilding Deadlock and the Submarine Peril

Ship Building Programme Is Still Delayed

Board Insists on Close Inquiry Into General Goethals's Plans

Chairman Denman Less Belligerent

McAdoo May Have Suggested That Boats, Not Talk, Are Wanted

[From The Tribune Bureau]

Washington, July 19.—The delay in expediting the emergency ship building programme continued to-day without material evidence of a disposition on the part of the Shipping Board to permit General Goethals to proceed with his programme without painstaking investigation of all its details. There was, however, less peevishness and militancy in the air of the Denman offices. At General Goethals's headquarters there was an impenetrable silence.

Chairman Denman to-night issued a statement which will bear an optimistic interpretation. The chairman of the Shipping Board, however, declined positively to be committed to an optimistic viewpoint. He insisted that his guarded and more or less ambiguous statement be interpreted by the press.

The impression prevails in official circles that Mr. Denman has received a hint from Secretary McAdoo that it might be well to minimize conversation and build ships. This may have had something to do with his less belligerent attitude toward General Goethals to-day.

Row Before President

The resumption of the row between General Goethals and Mr. Denman was brought to the particular attention of the President to-day when a resolution introduced by Senator Smoot, calling on the President for complete information regarding the disposition of the $750,000,000 appropriation voted by Congress for ships was passed by the Senate. The President had the matter brought rather pointedly to his attention last evening while attending a performance at a local theatre.

Two comedians after indulging in a farcical controversy declared for the edification of the Chief Executive: "Oh! This is not a real fight; it is only a Denman-Goethals row!"

The sally brought a good laugh, in which the President joined.

To-day Senator Jones, of Oregon, criticised the President for failure to proceed with the emergency ship programme, pointing out that delay in commandeering had permitted Japanese shipping interests to acquire two large ships recently completed in a Seattle yard. Four other ships, he added, were to be shortly purchased by other foreign interests.

It is certain that unless the Shipping Board composes its differences with General Goethals within a very few days, the pressure on the White House to settle the controversy will become too strong to be ignored. There is a growing feeling among members of Congress that the President is permitting the development of a most serious complication in a vital element of the war programme by his failure to issue mandatory and explicit orders to the principals in the controversy, defining authorities and functions and commanding action.

General Goethals is not without friends on the Shipping Board, though his supporters seem to be in the minority. At yesterday's hearing one member, it is creditably reported, remonstrated with Chairman Denman when he persisted in maintaining the air of a prosecuting attorney in questioning General Goethals.

"You cannot forget that you are a lawyer," said this member to the chairman.

Mr. Denman's Statement

Mr. Denman's statement follows:

"We are very rapidly acquiring full information regarding the contracts proposed to be let by General Goethals last Monday. We expect to receive to-morrow the facts as to the amount of the $150 per dead weight ton for ships which is to be spent in government yards, and the amount which is to be spent of the total in private yards, where the parts are to be fabricated. The work in the government yards is to be merely the assembling of the ships.

"The matter of commandeering is one for the State Department to discuss, which should be settled without delay. Although the board's plan for commandeering has been approved by the President, how it will be worked out in detail presents questions of state which will be decided as soon as possible.

"We are proceeding rapidly with the perfection of a programme which requires the expenditure of $750,000,000.

The statement of the Navy Department that the submarines have been sinking vessels at the rate of a million dead weight tons a month is substantially correct. But we believe the larger figures reported in to-day's press reports to be in error.

"At the rate of a million dead weight tons a month, all the wooden ships that Mr. Eustis has planned will be required and all the steel ships that the board's efforts with the steel procurers have obtained will be necessary to maintain even a working balance against the destruction.

"We are receiving every assistance and coöperation from General Goethals that his great ability can give us. The government fabricating yards will be built on government and not on leased property, and no agreement looking to the giving up of any of these yards to private interests will be entered into at this time.

"Adequate compensation will be paid to interests who will be asked to assist the government whose services can be accepted for rapid construction of ships. These men are not of the type to ask stimulating profits beyond a fair return for their abilities and enterprise, and with General Goethals's assistance we have no doubt contracts will be shortly closed."

Fear Defeat If U. S. Doesn't Build Fast Ships

Mercantile Men Hold Hurried Conference in Chamber of Commerce

Shipping men who assembled in conference at the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York yesterday issued a warning to the country that unless immediate preparations are made to combat U-boat warfare with all the resources at our command the war may be considered won—by Germany.

The conference was called at two days' notice by E. H. Outerbridge, president of the chamber, after a hurried trip to Washington. Mr. Outerbridge declared that the primary purpose in calling the meeting was to awaken the country to the fact that if the present rate of sinkings is maintained without the full force of our industrial efforts there could be but one conclusion—the defeat of the Allied Powers. Prominent marine men from all parts of the country joined with Mr. Outerbridge in the plea that "the country awake from its lethargy and build ships, ships and more ships."

Charts illustrating the results of unrestricted U-boat warfare, which had been prepared on data furnished by the Italian government, aroused those present to a denunciation of the dilatory methods employed in Washington. The demand was for ships that would attain a speed of fifteen or sixteen knots while in danger zones and twelve knots for ordinary travel, the extra speed to be supplied by reserve engines, which could be removed at the end of the war to afford greater tonnage capacity.

"The whole question of winning this war by defeating U-boat warfare," said Mr. Outerbridge, "is one of speed. The naval authorities agree that it is absolutely impracticable to build destroyers enough to convoy the thousands of slow-going merchant ships that must carry the foodstuffs and munitions and supplies across the Atlantic. Therefore there is only one possible way to avert the near approaching disaster. Every ship built by the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy in their yards must be built of a class and with a reserve power of speed that will enable the vessel, without convoy, to get away from a submarine, as shown on this chart."

Mr. Outerbridge pointed to a chart prepared by William B. Potter, of the General Electric Company, and J. S. Doyle, of the Interborough Rapid Transit, illustrating that the greater the speed at the command of a merchant vessel the less danger was there of being hit by a torpedo. A merchant vessel unable to make a speed greater than ten or eleven knots, said Mr. Outerbridge, certainly could be nothing more than "food" for the undersea craft. It was also said that the recent contracts made for the construction of new steel merchant ships by the government are on the basis of 10½, 11 and 12 knots speed.

"Thus," continued Mr. Outerbridge, "the question as to whether U-boat warfare is to be successful is a question of speed. And by speed I mean speed of quantity production, speed of the ship herself and the ability to manœuvre in the danger zone.

Figures Are Deceptive

"The country has been deceived by erroneous data that have been published regarding sinkings. The time has come when facts have got to be stripped of deception. I want to say that yesterday, at a meeting in this chamber, attended by all the representative shipping men of this city that could be summoned, and by the representatives of the leading marine insurance companies, this situation was presented as it has been presented here to-day, and there was an absolutely unanimous opinion that there was only one policy for the government to adopt and follow. That policy was that every industry and effort be coördinated on a programme of building ships, preferably steel ships, of the highest possible reserve power and speed; ships that under a normal condition would cross the Atlantic at twelve knots, for economy, until they reached the danger zone, and, that once within the zone, at fifteen or sixteen knots, so as to enable them to go through the zone with the greatest protection of all—sufficient speed."

Need of Naval Offensive Urged on the President

Action in Washington, in Conjunction with the Appointment of Geddes to Admiralty, Shows Allies Are Waking Up to the Necessity of Stamping Out U-Boats.

By C. W. GILBERT

Washington, July 19.—A strong representation in favor of an offensive naval policy against Germany has been made to the President. It is not understood that any definite plan of offensive has been recommended to him. But the faults and failures of the present method of resisting submarines, which violates every established principle of naval strategy, and the necessity of determining upon a more effective and aggressive campaign have been pointed out.

The demand for an offensive has been made in the only quarters where it can receive serious attention, for all such questions as this, as well as many very much smaller, now demand Mr. Wilson's personal consideration. What is the President's attitude toward a more vigorous naval policy has not been disclosed.

An offensive might take various forms. One of the favorite ways of expressing the idea of a naval onslaught upon Germany's submarine bases is "going in and digging them out." This idea has been lately brought forward anew by Winston Churchill, who is regaining his influence in British public life after his loss of prestige through the Dardanelles failure, with the suggestion that a huge array of pre-dreadnoughts be sent by the Allies against the German naval bases. This idea finds favor among the more ardent younger officers in the navy, and may be described as the extreme form of the sentiment for an offensive.

Plan for Blocking North Sea Discussed

The plan of blocking the north end of the North Sea to the egress of submarines is equally an offensive. More recently there has been discussion of a scheme for closing the channels by which the U-boats emerge from their German retreats with mines, a device against submarines whose effectiveness has been much improved, and by the sinking of ships. This would equally be an offensive, according to the ideas of those who are calling for one. But the really significant development is that the talk which has been going on in navy circles has now been brought before the President himself. This is an incident like in kind, though not equal in magnitude, to the promotion of Sir Eric Geddes to the chief place in the British Admiralty, another development that looks toward a naval offensive.

Will the British or the American navy initiate such an offensive? This country has the splendid opportunity to furnish the winning idea, as A. H. Pollen suggested in his articles in The Tribune. But it is mentally unready. It is still thinking in terms of war preparation, not war making.

President Wilson, without whom nothing starts here, is busy settling a shipping board row, an exports council row, adopting a price policy, determining draft questions, struggling with Congress over food regulation and doing a dozen big things that would tax the capacity of the greatest executive in the world. All these things have to do with getting ready for war, not with fighting a war.

Daniels Is Only Preparing for War

In the Navy Department the same mental state prevails. Mr. Daniels is doing a great many useful and necessary things, but he is not making war. He is getting ready for it, but not adopting policies which will win it. To an Administration in this state of mind the last thing that is possible is to arrive at such a conclusion as Mr. Pollen says is expected of this country—a policy that will defeat the submarine.

Once we shake off the chains of our material unreadiness and effect the proper organization—one that will give Mr. Wilson aids that he needs and decentralize the executive power in a workable fashion—the country will no doubt approach the question of the submarine with its characteristic energy, if the question of the submarine still remains.

That "if" is suggested by the Cabinet change which has just happened in England. Our navy, from the bottom almost to the top, approves an offensive as against the present purely defensive policy with regard to the submarine. The English navy, especially the top, is being brought into line. That is the way Washington interprets the appointment of Sir Eric Geddes as First Lord of the Admiralty. In a sense Mr. Pollen's criticisms are responsible for the appointment of Sir Eric. A couple of months ago Sir Eric, a railroad man with war experience, as a result of Mr. Pollen's work was put in charge of British ship construction, both naval and civil. The desire was to introduce a fresh point of view. It is the same desire which leads Mr. Pollen to turn to America to furnish the intelligence which shall defeat the submarine.

Hope of Offensive In Reshaped Cabinet

We enter the war without preconceptions. We have no mistakes to cover up or justify. We are not tired. Our minds are not closed to new possibilities. It was thus with Sir Eric. He came from the business world with a touch of the American hustling business world in his blood. And so well has the experiment justified itself, apparently, that in a couple of months he is advanced to the role of First Lord. The appointment is known here to be agreeable to Lord Northcliffe. It is agreeable to Mr. Pollen. And taken in conjunction with the return of Mr. Winston Churchill to the Cabinet, it is interpreter to mean that the sentiment which here expresses itself in a naval opinion in favor of a naval offensive is in England reshaping the Cabinet.

The First Lord corresponds roughly to the Secretary of the Navy here, but Sir Eric cannot at once make effective the power which Mr. Daniels has. As sea lord Jellicoe exerts a power which has no counterpart in the American navy. If Geddes is going to change the policy of the British navy toward the submarine, he will have to bring about the removal of Jellicoe and the substitution of a more aggressive officer.

Jellicoe is regarded here as responsible for the present British sea policy, which, so far as the submarine is concerned, is no policy at all. Jellicoe is felt by naval critics to have given the key to his policy and to his habit of mind in the Jutland battle, where he had his choice of risking nothing and adhering to the plan of containing the German fleet or of risking everything, and, if successful, of practically winning the war. Jellicoe chose the safe policy. He risked nothing. The German fleet went back to its base and was contained. Theoretically, the result was a British success, but it was a success that overlooked the submarine.

America May Choose Offensive

And, in a sense, the whole British naval policy has overlooked the submarine. The difficulty is that men trained in control of the sea's surface, grown old with fixed ideas, cannot think in terms of sea control that involves underwater instruments. It is a difficulty that our navy labors under. It is a difficulty that would confront any body of men facing utterly revolutionized conditions. Sir Eric is fresh and full of energy. That is why he is appointed. But it is one thing to accept the necessity of an offensive theoretically as he does, if Washington is not mistaken. It is another to determine what that offensive shall be. The ground, however, is being prepared for one. The splendid opportunity to choose may still be this country's when it knits all the power, intelligence, will to fight and fresh men of initiative that undoubtedly exists at its service into an effective war-making mechanism. This it will do some day.

Meanwhile, it is worth recording that the men who think in the American navy believe strongly in a naval offensive, and that the British are turning to a fresh-minded, aggressive young man in search of an offensive. There is that much progress.

"Staats-Zeitung" Sees Peace Move in Report

The "Staats-Zeitung," commenting editorially this morning over the signature of Bernard H. Ridder on the statement that submarines are sinking 1,600,000 tons of shipping a month, says:

"When Field Marshal von Hindenburg estimated that the British merchant marine could be practically wiped out between February, 1917, and February, 1918, a monthly average of 1,100,000 tons was the basis of his contention. That average is now being exceeded, with no offsetting in world construction. One of the purposes of the British government in publishing the facts at this time may be taken, therefore, to be the lubrication of the wheels of the United States Shipping Board and of the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

"Still clearer is the purpose to induce the American government to send more naval assistance to transatlantic waters.

"The British government is not only counting the days during which it will be possible to feed the British and French nations, and provide for the armies on the Continent; but it also views with apprehension a further curtailment of ships that will put the transportation of American forces across the Atlantic 'out of the question.'

"These facts are sufficient to explain the action of the British government in re-examining its U-boat 'facts and figures' and publishing the results to the world. It is not impossible, however, that it was moved in some degree to this course by a desire to prepare the American people for any peace offers which might be made by the German Chancellor."

Joseph E. Ridder, an editor of the "Staats-Zeitung," said yesterday that though the "Times'" figures might be accepted, they nevertheless were surprising.

"Even German reports, published in detail in neutral papers of Europe and supposed to be official, did not place the tonnage sunk so high," Mr. Ridder said. "Since June 11 these reports have not been available. Previous to that date they accounted for about 1,000,000 tons of enemy and neutral shipping a month, though they naturally could not include ships sunk by submarines which, for one reason or another never got back to their home ports."

Officials Deny That 1,600,000 Tons Are Sunk Each Month

[From The Tribune Bureau]

Washington, July 19.—The movement for a naval offensive takes force from a realization that the shipping situation is serious. No one in official circles, whether British or American, denies that it is serious, but just how serious is difficult to learn, for those who have the actual figures of destruction by submarines are few, and those few are reticent. It is doubtful whether even American government departments directly concerned have official figures of tonnage destroyed. It was said at the Navy Department that the navy had no submarine statistics except those which appear weekly in the American papers.

The figures given in the London dispatches from Charles H. Grasty published in "The New York Times" this morning—1,600,000 tons destruction a month—met with general disbelief here. Certain officials who held to the theory that the British were minimizing their losses were of the opinion that the loss of world's shipping averaged 1,000,000 tons a month, the destruction being somewhat less than that for the last three weeks. On the other hand, an official of the Shipping Board was sponsor for what he said were British official figures, which put the losses of the British at only 200,000 tons a month. This did not include neutral and other allied losses, which might bring the total up to a little over 300,000 tons a month. This was the most optimistic estimate in any American quarter, and it was the only one that was said to be official. One American officer whose duties had to do with maritime affairs and whose sources of information should be exceptionally good explained that the "Times" dispatch was probably an error in cable transmission and should have read 600,000 instead of 1,600,000 tons. His figures showed the losses for four months averaged 600,000 tons.

British representatives here possessed the facts, but were unwilling to give them out. Their attitude was most completely expressed by one representative, who said that "The Times" figures, 1,600,000 tons, probably referred to "dead weight" tons, which, reduced to "gross" tons, generally used in speaking of shipping, would be about 1,100,000 tons. This, he said, was in excess of the real losses, but not so much in excess as to call for official denial. He was speaking of average losses. The losses for the last three weeks had been somewhat less. Another British representative said unhesitatingly of the reported loss of 1,600,000 tons of shipping: "It is absolutely false. The real losses are about half that." A third British official adopted the "dead weight" ton theory, and calculated that the gross tonnage, represented by 1,600,000 "dead weight" tons, to be about 1,000,000 tons, which, he said, was in excess of the actual sinkings. On the whole, the British officials left the impression that the average losses were close to the 1,000,000-ton-a-month mark, although present losses were running somewhat less.

With regard to publishing the tonnage of destruction the British position seems to be this: The variation in the figures means very little. Even the total tonnage destroyed has not much significance. The amount is admitted to be grave. If 700,000 tons a month is destroyed a very dangerous situation is created. It is not especially more dangerous if the destruction reaches 900,000 tons a month.

With regard to the effects of the submarine campaign on the war the Allied representatives express and feel the utmost confidence. They think it will be perfectly possible for this country to get a considerable army to France. Shipping the men over does not, in their opinion, present insuperable difficulties, and once they are there they will not add to the number to be maintained and munitioned, for they will replace Frenchmen who will go back to civil occupations where they are direly needed. In fact, the work of the Frenchmen released will tend to ease the situation.

And in the end the utmost confidence is expressed that America "can do anything." With its steel production, its wealth and its labor supply it can build and will ultimately build ships faster than Germany can sink them. When they say that the situation is grave, as they do without hesitation, they express the utmost confidence that their countries can hold out, in spite of all the submarine can do, and that this country, with its tremendous power, will in the end win the war.

Allies Must Win By February, 1919, Pollen Declares

"Unless the Allies win the war on land before February, 1919, the Germans with their U-boats will be victorious."

Arthur H. Pollen, the English naval critic, who is regarded as the foremost authority in the world, sounded this warning at a luncheon given him at the Hotel McAlpin yesterday by 200 members of the Rotary Club. He described as "fatuous" any hope that some device would be invented in America or anywhere else which would stop the U-boat menace.

"Yet," he said, "I cannot believe that the end of the war will not come before the end of the year. And I believe that it will end with the renunciation by the German people of all purposes they started out to achieve. It will mean hard work for the Allies. We in England know that. It is one reason why Sir Eric Geddes has been made First Lord of the Admiralty. He is a man of sound business sense. He received part of his efficiency education in America. I am confident that he will bring the English fleet as near as possible to 100 per cent efficiency, whereas now it is 60 per cent.

"Britain has made good, no mistake about it. Now we look for you in America to do your part. You, too, must prepare for hard work. I should like to see the American navy show a little more originality in dealing with the naval situation, not as inventors of specific devices but as participants in naval warfare. I should like to see a general staff go to London, to be with us as brothers in brains as well as in arms.

"It is foolish, it is fatuous to have any hope that an invention will be forthcoming to deal effectively with the U-boats. It has been suggested that a great fleet of aeroplanes might destroy them. This is not feasible, because such a fleet could be of service only a few hours a week.

"Germany must be beaten on land. That means she must be beaten before February, 1919, or she will beat us by her U-boats. That is the time limit to which, under the present rate of loss of tonnage, the Allies can hold out."

Mr. Pollen said that the statement made by the special correspondent of "The New York Times" to the effect that Germany was sinking 1,600,000 tons of Allied shipping a month, was a palpable error. If this were true, he remarked, Germany could end the war in six or eight weeks, for in that time she would have wiped out all the Allied shipping.

"In April," he said, "it was generally stated that the tonnage loss was 600,000. It was also said that the non-British tonnage loss was less than 50 per cent of the British. In a period then, when ships were being lost at the rate of thirty-six a week, the rate of loss per month was less than one-half that given in the London report."

Lansing Welcomes Russian Envoys at Madison Barracks

General Roop Pleased at Snap of Student Officers in Regimental Parade

[By Telegraph to The Tribune]

Madison Barracks, July 19.—The officers' training camp here was visited to-day by members of the Russian Mission. The party consisted of General Vladimir Roop and Captain Cortilly Shutt, of the Russian army, and Major N. K. Averill, U. S. A.

The visitors were welcomed by Mayor I. R. Breen. In reply, General Roop spoke of the newborn freedom of his country and its appreciation of the arrival of American troops in the theatre of war. Other speakers at the luncheon were Senator Elon R. Brown and Camp Commandant Colonel W. R. Sample.

At the camp the visitors were greeted by 1,900 students, drawn up along the road leading from the barracks entrance to Colonel Sample's quarters, where the party was met by Secretary of State Robert Lansing and Mrs. Lansing. A regimental parade followed, in which the embryo officers brought forth much favorable comment from the Russian army officers.

Secretary of State Lansing then made a brief speech, in which he welcomed the distinguished visitors and congratulated the student officers upon their response to the nation's call. Mr. Lansing drew a vivid word picture of Russia's fight for democracy. Referring to the Russian general, the Secretary said:

"I need not tell you of the great general who is in our midst to-day, and who has helped to exemplify the bond of liberty with us, and which we will not see broken."

The speaker said he was proud that the general had been able to visit the American training camps, and felt sure that the conduct of our troops on the battlefield would cause our allies to feel that we were ready to give of our very heart to further the cause of liberty.

Export Council Fixes Rations for Neutrals

[From the Tribune Bureau]

Washington, July 19.—A virtual food embargo against European neutrals will soon be effected under the recent export control proclamation issued by the President, it was learned from official sources to-day. All that delays the execution of this policy now is the perfection of the administrative machinery of the Export Council.

It is said that the council is already in possession of accurate information regarding the quantities of food needed by European neutrals for home consumption. This data, it is credibly reported, will be used as the basis for a scheme of war rations which will effectively prohibit reexportation of foodstuffs to the Central Powers.

Russians Sink U-Boat in Baltic

Petrograd, July 19.—The North and South Agency reports that a Russian destroyer has sunk a German submarine in the Baltic and that the crew of the submarine was drowned.

Let the Navy Attack, Urges *Churchill*

WINSTON CHURCHILL, former First Lord of the British Admiralty, and just returned to the Cabinet as Minister of Munitions, has written for The New York Tribune a powerful appeal for an instant offensive by the Allied Navies. These great fleets, he declares, can spare enough battleships to hazard a death blow at the submarine menace, and still retain control of the surface of the seas.

Churchill's hard hitting article appears in next Sunday's Tribune. It is a typical instance of The Tribune's policy of giving its readers timely information on big subjects from the highest sources possible. Tell your newsdealer to-day to be certain that you receive your Sunday Tribune for July 22. It's well worth the forethought.

Tribune Service